APPENDIX B:

Survey of suppliers

The following material gives some examples of topics to cover in a market investigation and offers examples of information you might provide the suppliers to help them to effectively respond to the survey. These examples are not intended to be a complete collection of topics to be covered in a survey nor are they expected to be used in every survey. Each survey should be tailored to the particular needs of the acquisition and the information already available to the government. Generally these examples apply to both suppliers of products and suppliers of services. However, in some cases they may apply only to products or only to services. Information available through other sources should generally be gotten through those sources in order to keep the size of the survey to a minimum. As a general rule the smaller the survey, the better the response rate. Some of this information you may already know as a result of your market surveillance.

INFORMATION TO OBTAIN FROM SUPPLIERS

General Performance Specifications and Product Information

- Product data sheets

- Availability of product samples

- Purchase descriptions used by other government activities or used in commercial transactions, including commercial specifications standards and statements of work

- Average time between model changes and practice of providing continued parts inventories, upgrades, or production for phased-out models

- Plans for handling upgrades and obsolescence

- Length of time the product has been produced or service provided

- Product quality, reliability, and maintainability experience of similar users

- List of products and company services satisfying identical or similar service requirements

- Cost drivers in the manufacture and use of the product

- Applicable regulatory and de facto standards

Supplier Capability

- Number of suppliers

- Size and location of suppliers and their current market

- Product distribution channels

- Business practices in sales and distribution from manufacturers to wholesaler, distributor, or retailer, to user

- Production capacity to meet requirements as part of commercial sales and the appropriate time to buy

- Packaging, handling, storage, and transportation practices

Market Acceptance Criteria

- Annual sales

- Anticipated future orders

- Description of contractor's quality controls including extent of statistical process controls

- Warranty terms and practices, annual returns under warranty

- Need for any pre-production or production qualification testing and special quality assurance requirements

- Product evaluation criteria (including life-cycle criteria, if applicable)

Supportability Issues

- Product quality, reliability, and maintainability experience of similar users

- Repair parts availability and lead times, documentation, pricing, and distribution systems

- Customer service, installation, checkout, and user operation and maintenance instructions

- Requirements and provisions for manpower and personnel

- Competitive or sole source repair and support base

- Training and training support requirements

- Requirements for and availability of tools, test equipment, computer support resources, calibration procedures, operations, and maintenance manuals

- Commercial repair capabilities

- Supplier calibration, repair, and overhaul practices and capabilities documentation

- Supplier commitment to out-year support

- Degree of technical data package availability

- Stability of current configuration and technology

Test Data

- Hardware, software, and manpower interface issues such as human factors and product safety as experienced by similar users

- Manufacturer test results

- Certification or test results from independent test organizations

References

- List of those currently using the product

- List of similar users currently using the product in the kinds of environments in which DoD uses it

Business Data

- Distribution practices

- Minimum order quantities

- Typical contract terms and conditions

- Financing practices

- Warranty procedures

- Potential conflicts of interest (for services)

INFORMATION TO PROVIDE TO SUPPLIERS

General Information

Operating characteristics for hardware and software

- Environmental conditions for use

- Usage (e.g., fixed, airborne, tactically deployable)

System Interface or Integration Requirements

- Computer language, speed, throughput, ports, memory and expansion potential.

- Radio transmission frequency requirements and allocation status

- Rules for government use of frequency spectrum

- Human factors considerations

Maintainability Information

- Self-test requirements

- Limitations, if any, on organizational-level support equipment

Communications-Computer System Interface Information

- Software portability to other communications-computer systems

- Operating duty cycle (e.g., 24 hours, intermittent)

- Input power quality (drops, surges, spikes, noise)

- Essential safety characteristics

- Reliability, Maintainability, and Survivability data

- Nuclear hardening requirements

- Chemical, biological, and radiological survivability data

- Electromagnetic compatibility

Logistics Support Information

- Planned maintenance echelons

- Maintainer proficiency levels

- Software maintenance plans

- Limitations on evacuation of reparable items (battlefield, underground, rough handling)

- Maintenance environment (weather, mud)

- Supply support, support equipment needs, limitations

- Training needs

- Technical data needs

- Transportability

Services Information

- Description of services desired

- Period of performance

- Expected deliverables

- Expected labor categories